social aspect of getting to see the communi-

Ms. Lamba, 34, said there are only two other Sikh families in Glen Head, where she has lived for the last 18 years, so she places great value in being able to come to a place where she can be just one of many. Here, the women's colorful tunics and head shawls do not stand out; nor do the men's turbans or the boys' patkas — a head covering gath-

in population from 17,523 in 1890 to 34,333 in 2000, according to the 2000 census. Asian Indians, who include Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Christians, are now the largest Asian group on Long Island, followed by the Chioese and the Koreans.

These Asian groups have grown enough in recent years to support their own supermarkets, language schools, churches, temples and mosques on Long Island, making the



weekly trips that many families used to make to ethnic enclaves in Queens unnecessery. Many members of these Asian groups say the best restaurants and specially stores still lie west of Nassau County, and lies to places like Little India in Jackson not yet been severed. But the Asian communities on Long Island are well on their way toward self-sufficiency.

Many of the Island's Asian families first settled in the ethnic enclaves in Queeos and, following a time-honored pattern, migrated to Long Island in search of the suburban ideal — a single-family home, a patch of lawn and better public schools.

"When we initially come to settle in this country, most go to the city where they can

the week, everybody is busy," he said. "But on the weekend, we can all come together bere as a community."

The largest concentrations of Indians on the Island are in Elmont, Hicksville, East Meadow and North New Hyde Park. In the Herricks school district, which has seen a large influx of Indian and Korean Iemilies, the Asian population in the high school went from 5.5 percent in 1985 to more than 36

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INSIDE



LIPA IS STILL HUNGRY

A guarded outlook for the summer and a plea for aggressive action in coming years.

Hofstra is marking the centennial of John Steinbeck's birth.

Parents' Fear: A Monster in the Playground

By JOAN SWIRSKY

ATHY RICHARDSON, a Carle
Place resident, was picking up her
4-year-old son, Danny, from a day
care center in Mineola last November when she saw a notice saying the
E.P.A. planned to drill next door.

"When I went outside, I noticed drilling equipment in the parking lot next door and I called the Department of Health the next day to ask them if the playground and the drinking water was eafe," Ms. Richardson eaid. "A representative visited the site within days. He told me that the D.O.H. had no record of a day care center even being there. But he immediately arranged for the elir to be tested and called the Environmental Protection Agency."

Word quickly spread that the day care center was adjacent to an active Superfund toxic waste site. Now an outraged group of parents wants to find out why they were not notified two years earlier, when the site was placed on the Superfund list.

Ms. Richardson, 37 and divorced, said her son is still going to the day care center "because he has a wonderful male teacher who acts as a role model. And, also, I feel confident that the air is better now and that

the authorities are getting the problem solved,"

Bul many other parents have withdrawn their children. "We have lost almost belf our enrollment," Libby Barland, vice president for markeling at Tutor Time's corporate headquarters in Boca Raton, Pia., said of the Mineola site. "Presently we have less than 100 children enrolled."

Leslie McCarthy, a Wesibury resident who withdrew her 3-year-old son, Kevin, and 17-menth-old daughter, Grace, from Tutor Time after the news spread, said she had been told that enrollment was down to 40 from nearly full capacity in September. The school is itensed to serve 212 children.

"My children had constant upper-respiratory conditions when they were at Tutor Time, and Grace ended up twice in the emergency room," said Mrs. McCarthy, 41, an assistant director at the Goddard institute for Space Studies in Manhattan. She said a group of pareots met in February with federal, state and local health officials, "but there's still a lot of anger."

"People lase pallence quickly when they don't get the answers they want and need," she said.

Stephanie A. Sokenis, 33, who lives in Hicksville and works in Jericho, said she transferred her 3-year-old son, Michael, to another day care center. "I was incredibly

Paul Martro for The New York Turn

it was next to a toxic waste site. Many want to know why they weren't told sooner.

livid that I never got a call from Tutor Time telling me that they knew about the toxic site," she said.

The Mineola center is located at 80 Herricks Road, next to the site of the former Jackson Steel Company, which manufactured metal forms from 1977 until 1991. Byproducts of the degreasers used to clean the metals — tetrachloroethylena, perchlo-

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Parents' Fear: A Monster in the Playground

Continued From Page 1

rbetbylene and trithforoethylene—contaminated the soil and ground-water. The chemicals have been linked to cancer in some studies, and the federal Department of Health and Human Services lists them as the ving the potential for causing getts and chronic neurological and palmonary problems, kidney and lively disease and immune system problems.

a Between 1979 and 1996, private and county health department inspections found multiple contaminants in the sell, in 1999, the site was placed in the E.P.A.'s national priority list of politized sites, and in 1900 it became a Class 2 federal Superfund site. Rich Cahill, a spokesman at the E.P.A. office in New York City, said there were 15 Class 2 Superfund sites in Natralisand 15 in Sulfolk.

Class I denotes the most severe problem, but Walter Hung, president of Toutes Targeting, a computermapping company that tracks touledies, and no site has ever been placed in that category.

e "The Jackson Steel site clearly is for the place that a day care center should ever have been situated, or anyplace in the vicinity," Mr. Hang fild. "This center is right next to one of the most toxic domp sites in the downtry."

2 But only this month was a rigar posted outside the school identifying the property as a Soperfund site. And sight barrels of taxle waste remainin a building at the site.

"The barrels that remain at the site were left there for us to sample their contents, to see what was in them before they were disposed of," Mr. Cahill said. "The barrels are ready to be moved and we're now branging for their disposal."

The Tutor Time parents are not the only ones alarmed. "I'm very concerned because my femily and I



the center

Ms. Barland said the Mineda Tufor Time was lesued a certificate of occupancy when it opened in 1995 "with no environmental ferves coming up." She said Tutor Time was notified by the E.P.A. in March 2001 of spectring testing at the Jackson Steel site, "but most people did not give it a second thought. It was never deemed a concern or anything to warry about. When they did testing in November, they still never told us there was a concern or reason to worry. We take direction from the Department of Family Services as well as the S.P.A. Everyone totally downplayed any air quality issues,"

Mr. Van Slyke sold the day care center's license was renewed has October "because we were not aware of the air quality issues until the following month." He sold Tutor Tires is now complying with state and federal mandates to munitor the and federal mandates to munitor the they don't maintain ongoing air recretoring, we will act very swiftly to suspend their license and prohibit them from operating."

Cynthia Brown, a spokeswoman for the Nassan County Department of Health, said her department "started to evaluate new day care sites in 1888 to see if they were objecent to any potential environmental hazards like gas stations or dry cleaners." But older sites, like Tutor Time, were not evaluated, she said. "When we learned of this in November, we began assisting the E.P.A. and state health department in contecting the school and pareria and taking oir samples."

Nicole Selizer, community involvement coordinator at the E.P.A. office in New York City, said the air samples were below the state health department's Braits, "but due to the sensitivity of the population exposed, the county bealth department took additional tests in mid-December" and found levels of perchloroethylene, also known as perc, that exceeded state Braits by more than 15d percent tostide Tutor Time,

By the end of January, the school and state and hocal agencies had installed a new ventilation and air flitration system and a vacuum-extraction system under the building's foundation to remove perc vapors. Subsequent air testing revealed "a significant reduction in contaminants to levels well below state limiting." Ms. Brown said. More soil testing was conducted in mid-February; the results are expected this week.

Cleaning up toxic waste sites "la a

Some parents report mysterious illnesses.

The congresswoman, a registered murse, said that when her grandchitdren ettended Tutor Time, she used to dreak ker danghter-in-law, "Why are the kide always getting sick?"

"I live on Long Island, where we have high breast cancer and prostate cencer refes, and pow a rise in leukemia," Mrs. McCarthy said. "What these agencies don't understand in that perception is everything. Even if they don't have anything to hide, it's getting to look that way."

Gerard Maher, a New York City firelighter, said he met E.P.A. officials at Tutor Time when they were testing the air in February.

"I asked them if the air was safe and they said yes," said Mr. Maker, "so I asked them to put their signstures on paper saying it was 100 percent sale, but they wouldn't. They said, 'We feel it's sale,' so I told them I don't operate on feelings, I want bard data. Who will be responsible for tracking these children or paying for their care if they get health conditions that come from this size?"

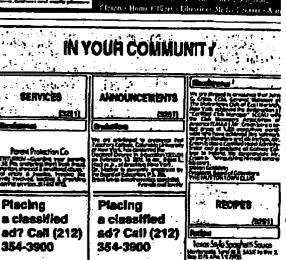
He and his wife, Lisa, immediately removed their 5-year-old daughter, Gabriella, from the school,

"I want legislation saying that the regulatory agencies have to work tagether, coordinate their operations and communicate with each other," Mr. Maher said. "Before 9/11, the P.B.I. and C.I.A. and D.E.A. didn't communicate at all with each other, but now they do and we're all better oil."

Mrs. 'Carr said: "These agencies town there was a day care center next to a contaminated industrial site that the government has been investigating for roore than 10 years, and they did nothing. They keep talking about, 'minimum risk levele' of toxins and chemicals, but I say to them: When It's your child, there is so acceptable minimum risk."







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The New York Tip

york in this building," said Stanley J. Sanders, whose law firm, Sanders & Sanders, is next door to Tutor Time. The other immediate neighbors are a gool hall, an electronics store and a restaurant.

Mr. Sanders said the contamination of the Jackson Steel property had long been known. In 1892, he said, Vinthrop University Hospital considered buying the site. "But after it conducted major environmental studies and found meral dust and a plume of pollution underneath the Jackson Steel building, they decided bot to buy it." he said.

"An abandoned corporation owns the property, and probably \$3 million of accumulated taxes haven't been paid on it for more than 15 years," Mr. Sanders said. "Fleet Bank owns the mortgage, but they won't foreclose because they probably don't want the responsibility of cleaning it

 (A spokeswoman for Fleet Bank in Boston would neither confirm nor deny that it held a mortgage on the property.)

"The county and the village have known about this for 15 years, and it's a shame they did nothing and didn't assume the responsibility for the cleanup." Mr. Sanders added. "They did nothing. But with their knowledge of Jackson Steel, they should have done more when the day care center moved in."

"I feel deceived by the government agencies that knew about this."
Ms. Richardson said. "Until things bet hot, they don't seem to talk to each other. Why didn't the agency that gives out licenses for day care benters know this was a Superfund sire?"

William C. Van Slyke, a spokesman for the state Office of Children and Family Services, the agency that licenses day care centers ourside New York City, said: "We only learned about the Jackson Steel site in December from the state health department and we immediately determined that Tutor Time had been informed of its existence by the E.P.A. the previous March but failed to notify our agency, which they're prequired to do. So we fined them \$500 in January."

Mr. Cahili confirmed that his agenby faxed notice of the site's contamination to Tutor Time in March 2001.

But Ms. Barland said: "We never heard the words Jackson Steel until November, when we were advised to send a note about the site to the families, and we never heard the word Superfund until December. There were no alarm beits.

"We've been in touch with all the agencies on a continual basis to inake sure the environment was safe and there was no threat to any child," Ms. Barland continued. "The ESP.A. has not recommended closing

Stuggish process," Ms. Seitzer said, adding that the E.P.A. posted a notice at Tutor Time informing the parents of the problem in November. But except for Ms. Richardson, no parent seems to have seen it.

"When a child has pink eye, every parent gets an individual note from the school," said Bernadette Carr, a resident of Garden City whose 3-year-old daughter, Charlotte, attended Tator Time. "But when your child is in a toxic environment, there is no personal note, only an alleged notice that they were asked to produce at a parent-teacher meeting in January but couldn't."

in a show of hands, every parent at a meeting of Turor Time parents Monday night at Winthrop University Hospital indicated that they had not seen the notice.

Mrs. Carr, 33, a paralogal with the son-profit Family and Children's Association in Hempstead, said that her daughter had hives and breathing problems until she removed her from the school in January. "Then they vanished and never came back" she said.

"I'm worried about the long-term effects of these poisons on my child and other children," she added. "The government agencies and the school were either lax or they didn't want to give us information. Our country keeps talking about purting kids trist and it takes a village, but this is not the case. Concern for our kids was

Parents question who knew about the toxic site and when.

not their top priority."

Kieran Crowley, a New York Post reporter who lives in Bellmore, removed his daughter from the school but has demanded that the state test all the children for liver and kidney function.

"There is no science on these levels of exposure in children," he said.
"That's the least the state could do after it conceaded so much evidence about this cite for some "

about this site for years."

Ms. Scitzer said: "Parents have every reason in the world to feel concorned and to want information. We've ordered Tutor Time to clean up their environment and we're overseeing the process."

That is not good enough for Rep. Carolyn McCarthy of Mincola, Leslie McCarthy's mother-in-law.

"I've been working on getting answers to this from the E.P.A. and other agencies, nearly daily, for a year," the congresswoman said, "and I feel we're getting snone-walled. Now, they're all of a sudden talking about removing the trains, but they've been raising red flags by not being more forthcoming."



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